

TOOL

# Cycle of an Emotion

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# Cycle of an Emotion

## **Purpose**

This tool illustrates the stages of an emotional experience, from the initial prompting event through interpretation, physical response, urge to act, action, and aftereffects. It provides a framework for understanding how emotions unfold and how they influence behavior.

## **When to Use**

Use this tool when reflecting on emotional experiences—your own or others’—especially in moments of stress, conflict, or strong reactions. It is useful for building awareness of emotional patterns and identifying opportunities for more intentional responses.

## **How to Use It**

Review the cycle's stages and reflect on a recent emotional experience. Identify what happened at each stage, paying particular attention to how interpretations shaped the emotional response and subsequent actions. Use this awareness to consider where you might interrupt the cycle in the future—such as by reframing an interpretation or pausing before acting. This tool can also be used in coaching conversations to help others build insight into their emotional patterns and expand their range of responses.

# Cycle of an Emotion

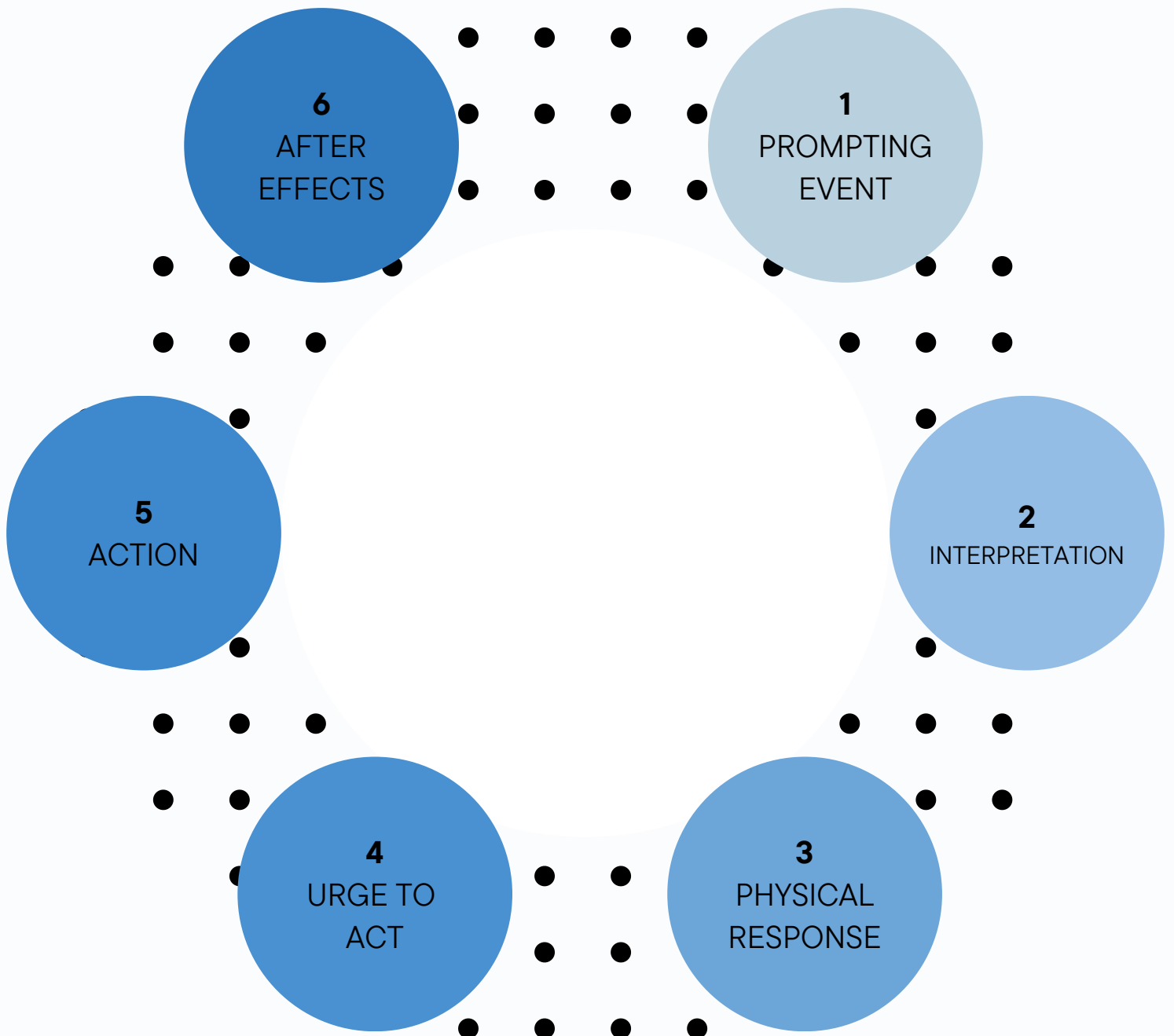


Exhibit 4.1. © Elena Aguilar, *The Art of Coaching Teams: Building Resilient Communities that Transform Schools*. Jossey-Bass, 2016.

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Coaching emotions can be intense and intimidating. When teachers are overwhelmed, frustrated, or resistant, it can seem like they'll never make breakthroughs to serve children. But it doesn't have to be this way.

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